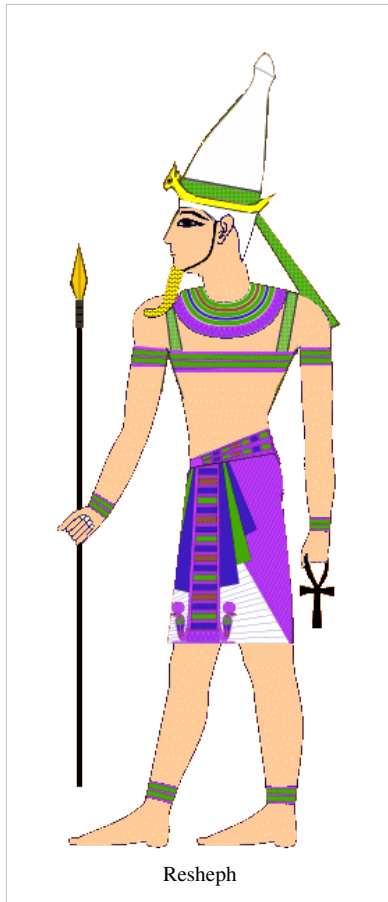


Resheph



Ršp
in hieroglyphs

Resheph, **Rashshaf**, **Rasap**, or **Reshef** (Canaanite/Hebrew *ršp* רשפ) was a Canaanite deity of plague and war. Resheph is associated with lightning, and hence also interpreted as a weather deity.

In Ugaritic Texts

In Ugarit, Resheph was identified with Nergal, in Idalion, Cyprus, with Apollo.^[1]

Resheph is mentioned in Ugaritic mythological texts such as the epic of Kirta^[2] and The Mare and Horon.^[3] In Phoenician inscriptions he is called *rshp gn* 'Resheph of the Garden' and *b l chtz* 'lord of the arrow'. Phoenician-Hittite bilinguals refer to him as 'deer god' and 'gazelle god'.

In Kition, Cyprus, Resheph had the epithet of *hš*, interpreted as "arrow" by Javier Teixidor,^[4] who consequently interprets Resheph as a god of plague, comparable to Apollo whose arrows bring plague to the Danaans (Iliad I.42-55).

Resheph became popular in Egypt under Amenhotep II (18th dynasty), where he served as god of horses and chariots. Originally adopted into the royal cult, Resheph became a popular deity in the Ramesside Period, at the same time disappearing from royal inscriptions. In this later period, he is depicted with a ram's head, armed with shield, spear and axe, often together with Qetesh and Min.

The ancient town of Arsuf in central Israel still incorporates the name Resheph, thousands of years after his worship ceased.

In Eblaite Texts

Resheph is found in the third millennium tablets from Ebla (Tell Mardikh) as Rasap or Ra-sa-ap. He is listed as the divinity of the cities of Atanni, Gunu, Tunip, and Shechem. Rasap is also one of the chief gods of the city of Ebla having one of the four city gates named in his honor.^[5]

In Hebrew Bible

The name appears as a word in Classical Hebrew with the derived or figurative meanings of "arrow" (as "lightning of the bow", Job 5:7) and "a burning fever, a plague" (by which the body is "inflamed", Deuteronomy 32:24).^[6] *Resheph* as a personal name, a grandson of Ephraim, occurs in 1 Chronicles 7:25.

The Hebrew of Habakkuk 3:5 names Dabir and Resheph marching defeated before El's parade from Teman and Mount Paran. Dabir and Resheph are normally translated as Pestilence and Plague. Due to the literary discoveries at Tell Mardikh, for the first time Dabir is attested as a divinity outside the Hebrew Bible.^[7] This discovery is significant for the proper translation of this verse.

Notes

[1] Javier Teixidor, The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Cesnola Collection. Metropolitan Museum Journal 11, 1976, 65

[2] tablet 1/CAT 1.14, column 1, lines 18-20; tablet 2/CAT 1.15, column 2, line 6

[3] CAT 1.100, lines 30-31

[4] Javier Teixidor, The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Cesnola Collection. Metropolitan Museum Journal 11, 1976, 65

[5] Giovanni Pettinato, The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981 ISBN-0-385-13152-6

[6] Strong's Concordance (<http://cf.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7565>)

[7] TM.75.G.1464

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- Wolfgang Helck: *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, Band 5) 2. Auflage, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1971 ISBN 3-447-01298-6 (*Zu Reschef in Ägypten: S. 450-454*)

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